

## BOOK REVIEW

STEPHEN S. WHITE AND MARSHA V. GALLAGHER (EDS.), with translation by WILLIAM J. ORR, PAUL SCHACH, AND DIETER KARCH. 2008. **The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied: May 1832–April 1833.** (ISBN-10: 0806138882; ISBN-13: 978-0806138886, hbk.). University of Oklahoma Press, 2800 Venture Drive, Norman, Oklahoma 73069-8218, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.oupres.com, 800-627-7377). \$85.00, 544 pp., color and black and white illustrations, 12" × 8".

Made famous through the paintings of Swiss artist Karl Bodmer, the North American expedition of German naturalist Prince Maximilian of Wied in 1832–34 was the first scientific exploration of the Missouri River's upper reaches since the epic journey of Lewis and Clark almost thirty years earlier. Maximilian's journal has never been presented fully in English—until now. This collector's-quality, oversized volume, the first of a three-volume set, draws on the Maximilian-Bodmer Collection at Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska.

German aristocratic naturalist, ethnographer, and explorer whose observations on a trip to the American West in the 1830s provide valuable information about the Plains Indians at that time, Maximilian was the prince of the small state of Neuwied and served in the Prussian army. He undertook explorations in Brazil in 1815–17 and in North America in 1832–34. On the latter journey, he took with him the Swiss artist Karl Bodmer to record the landscapes and peoples they encountered. They traveled from Boston westward along the Ohio River to St. Louis, Missouri, from where they traveled by steamboat up the Missouri River through what are now Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana. The westernmost point they reached on their journey was Fort McKenzie, a trading post in central Montana. Maximilian made copious notes of his contacts with the Mandan, Hidatsa, and other Indian tribes of the Missouri River area, while Bodmer made hundreds of superb watercolors and drawings of the landscapes and the Indians they encountered.

Many exhibitions and books have featured Joslyn's extraordinary holdings of beautifully detailed watercolors and prints by Karl Bodmer. Less attention has been paid to Prince Maximilian's manuscript journals, which the prince collectively called his Tagebuch. These journals, each containing about 300 pages filled with the prince's daily observations on people, places, flora, fauna, and events, written by him in a now obsolete German script and illustrated with his ink and watercolor drawings, are the subject of a complex, multiyear publication project being carried out by Joslyn's Durham Center for Western Studies in partnership with the University of Oklahoma Press.

Volume 1 covers the beginning of the expedition, commencing with a stormy voyage across the Atlantic and ending with the frontier town of St. Louis. Maximilian's primary goal had always been the Western wilderness, but a combination of factors delayed his journey there: the belated delivery of essential supplies, wariness of a cholera epidemic affecting chosen routes of travel, and his own illness that required a lengthy recuperation in New Harmony, Indiana. In the months spent in the east, Bodmer immersed himself in his role as illustrator, producing drawings of the specimens collected for scientific purposes, the natural environment, and of the towns and settlements rapidly overtaking the frontier. His exquisite compositions offer a fascinating window on a brash new nation, from its burgeoning cities on the eastern seaboard to its pioneer farms of Indiana and Illinois.

Maximilian's notes and Bodmer's pictures form an invaluable account of the language, dress, culture, and customs of several Indian tribes that subsequently almost disappeared owing to disease, war, and white encroachment on their lands. Maximilian wrote up his observations in *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834, 2 vol. (1839–41) (Travels in the Interior of North America)*. An English translation of parts of his field journal was published in *People of the First Man: Life Among the Plains Indians in Their Final Days of Glory* (1976).

*The North American Journals* offer an incomparable view of the upper Missouri and its native peoples at a pivotal moment in the history of the American West. This meticulous account, newly translated with extensive modern annotation, faithfully reproduces Maximilian's 110 drawings and watercolors as well as his own notes, asides, and appendices. This first volume, which covers May 1832 to April 1833, documents Maximilian's voyage to North America and his first encounters with Indians upon reaching the West. This is an essential resource for nineteenth-century western American history and a work of lasting value. I am looking forward with great anticipation to the concluding volumes. It includes an extensive bibliography, an index to flora and fauna, and a general index. Recommended for all libraries and individuals with an interest in the history of the West or Western art.—Gary L. Jennings, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 500 East 4th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.